

and half of what's on there may be irrelevant. But this is a big deal. This is a huge deal. This is the last major election of the 20th century and the first election of the 21st century. Things have changed. We have to change. And America is going to go into that next century with either the unifying vision dominant or the divisive vision dominant.

That's what I want you to think about, not Democrats or Republicans or any of that. I want you to think about your country. And if you look at the life and career and work of this

man, it would be hard to think of someone who could be a better poster boy for a unifying vision of America's future in the 21st century than Tom Bruggere.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:46 a.m. at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. In his remarks, he referred to Oregon senatorial candidate Tom Bruggere, his wife, Kelley, and their children Maria and T.C.; Mayor Vera Katz of Portland; and actor Christopher Reeve.

Statement on Same-Gender Marriage *September 20, 1996*

Throughout my life I have strenuously opposed discrimination of any kind, including discrimination against gay and lesbian Americans. I am signing into law H.R. 3396, a bill relating to same-gender marriage, but it is important to note what this legislation does and does not do.

I have long opposed governmental recognition of same-gender marriages, and this legislation is consistent with that position. The act confirms the right of each State to determine its own policy with respect to same-gender marriage and clarifies for purposes of Federal law the operative meaning of the terms "marriage" and "spouse."

This legislation does not reach beyond those two provisions. It has no effect on any current Federal, State, or local antidiscrimination law and does not constrain the right of Congress or any State or locality to enact antidiscrimination laws. I therefore would take this oppor-

tunity to urge Congress to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, an act which would extend employment discrimination protections to gays and lesbians in the workplace. This year the Senate considered this legislation contemporaneously with the act I sign today and failed to pass it by a single vote. I hope that in its next session Congress will pass it expeditiously.

I also want to make clear to all that the enactment of this legislation should not, despite the fierce and at times divisive rhetoric surrounding it, be understood to provide an excuse for discrimination, violence, or intimidation against any person on the basis of sexual orientation. Discrimination, violence, and intimidation for that reason, as well as others, violate the principle of equal protection under the law and have no place in American society.

NOTE: H.R. 3396, approved September 21, was assigned Public Law No. 104-199.

Remarks in Brandon, South Dakota *September 20, 1996*

Give them a hand. [*Applause*] I thought they did well. Did you read somewhere that that was my favorite Beatles song? [*Laughter*] Or did you just do it on your own—it was a wonderful job. Thank you very much, and thank you for playing here tonight.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to be back in South Dakota. I came here three times when I was seeking the Presidency. I loved every trip. I couldn't wait to get back. And I want you to know how we came to be here tonight. We were planning our schedule a couple of weeks

ago, and we were going to do this bus trip in Washington and Oregon, and I looked at the map and I looked at the schedule and I looked at the time, and they said, "You're going to be dead when you finish." I said, "I'm not going to be that tired. I want to go to South Dakota before I go back to Washington." And I'm glad to be here.

I want to thank all of those who have been here before tonight, your student, Kelly Soye, Senator Chet Jones, Rick Weiland. Thank you for running for Congress, Rick, and I hope you make it. I want to thank Sarah Sholz for that wonderful introduction of Hillary. I liked it even better than she did. *[Laughter]* It meant a lot to me, and I appreciate it.

I want to thank my longtime friend of nearly 25 years now, Senator George McGovern, for being here tonight, for his life and public service, and for his wonderful and very brave book about his beloved daughter. And I'm glad he's home in South Dakota. I'm honored to be here on the same platform with him tonight. Thank you.

I want to thank your superintendent, George Gulson, and your principal, Don Kuchel, for letting me come here. And thank you for delaying the homecoming just a little bit. We needed to stop until it quit raining anyway. *[Laughter]* I am really pleased to see all of you here. I want to say a special word of thanks to the football teams. They came out in the back, and I got to shake hands with all the football teams and all the folks that were there supporting them and take my picture with them. And they made me feel young again. I liked it, standing up there with them. *[Applause]* Thank you.

I want to acknowledge one other legislator who is here, State Senator Pam Nelson. She is running for public utility commissioner. I used to spend a lot of time on public utilities. We're just in a period of deregulating them more with the telecommunications act. And it's very important that we preserve all the telecommunications operations we can in rural America. I come from a rural State, and I know that this is a big election for you. And I wish her well, and I wish South Dakota well in dealing with these new challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish I could watch the whole football game. I was sitting here thinking it's been a long time since I've been to a high school football game, and I never

had a bad time at a single one I attended in my whole life.

Tim Johnson said this election has been going on a long time. It hasn't gone on forever; it just seems like it's gone on forever. *[Laughter]* But it won't be long now. And I wanted to come here tonight to say to all of you really two things. First of all, from my perspective and not just because he is a Democrat and a member of my party, I think Tim Johnson is one of the most gifted public servants with whom I have ever worked. He is highly respected, and I wish him well. The second thing I wanted to say is, when I came to South Dakota, I thought I would feel fairly comfortable because I was Governor of a farming State for many years, and I grew up in Arkansas and all my people were from there. And when I first started coming up here I found some people from there who had ties to people up here, and it was a very personal experience for me.

I ran for President because, frankly, I was turned off by what I thought was going on in Washington. I could see that our country was moving into a period of dramatic, breathtaking change and our patterns of working and living and relating to each other, relating to the rest of the world. And it seemed to me that most of what I heard coming out of Washington, DC, was argument. And there was a lot more focus on who to blame than what to do. And where I came from, if I'd focused on who to blame instead of what to do, I'd have been thrown out of office and been looking for another job. And it seemed to me that what we needed was to bring ideas back to Washington and action and get rid of the insults and the blaming and the trying to divide people, and try to run the country the way you try to run this community or this school or this football team or any other enterprise where people have to work to succeed.

So when these two teams go out to compete tonight, you know, nobody would get any points for breaking the rules or bad-mouthing their opponents. There is a set of rules, everybody has to work together, and if you do your best, you're better off whether you win or not. That's the way this country ought to work. That's the way this country ought to work.

So I have tried to follow a simple vision. You see, I believe that the best days of this country are still ahead, and I think—I can talk in the dark if you can listen. I believe the best

days of our country are still ahead, and I think that what we have to do is to find a way to meet the incredible challenges and seize the opportunities of this new world without giving up the values that make our lives special. And to me, that means we have to do three things: fix the electricity—[laughter] Now, where was I here? We've got to try to create the conditions in which every person who is willing to work for it has an opportunity. We have to tell everybody there are some things nobody can give you, and all of our citizens have to be more responsible. And then we've got to bring this country together in a community, a sense of teamwork, a sense of family, a sense of togetherness.

You know, there is not much diversity maybe in South Dakota or in Arkansas, but when we had the Olympics and Hillary and I went to Atlanta to kick them off, there were 197 different nations there. We've got folks from 150 of those places in our biggest county in America. But we have somehow found a way to stay together and work together because our country is founded on a devotion to this place and to the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, the idea of work and family, reverence for faith, everybody else's as well as your own. That's what holds us together.

And you know, I spend so much time as your President when I have to deal with foreign policy—you think about how much time I have to spend because other people won't behave that way. People around the world, they do things that you wouldn't put up with your kids doing, because they have to look down on other people who are different from them. What's the problem in Bosnia, those people killing each other because they're of different ethnic and religious backgrounds? Do you know, biologically, they're identical? There is no ethnic difference. It's an historical accident that some were Serbs, some were Croatians, and some were Muslims.

In the Middle East they're still fighting. In Northern Ireland they're fighting over what happened 600 years ago. All of the young folks just want to get on about their lives. And I tell you that to make the point that this is a very special place. And if we can go into this 21st century committed to working together and staying together and building a bridge that we can all walk across, we're going to do very well.

And let me just give you one or two examples. I think we have to build a bridge to the 21st century with a strong economy. And I'm proud of the fact that we have 10½ million more jobs and record exports and record farm exports and record new small businesses in the 4 years since I became President. I think that's a good thing.

I'm proud of the fact that, on October 1st, 10 million Americans will get an increase in the minimum wage and, at the same time, every single small business in America will be made eligible for a tax cut when they invest more in their business. And we're making it easier for those folks and self-employed people, including farmers, to take out health insurance, because they'll get a bigger tax deduction for the cost of their health insurance premium. And we're giving a \$5,000 tax credit to couples that will adopt children, because there are a lot of kids out there that need homes.

All of those things were done together, pro-business, pro-work, pro-family. That's the way America ought to work all of the time, and I'm proud of that. But—Tim Johnson alluded to it, but when we were having the debate over the farm bill, we hung pretty tough, Tim and I and, most important, Tom Daschle, who can't be with us tonight, but he led our fight to make sure we kept some provisions for rural development in there, to make sure that we didn't walk away from our commitments to rural water systems and other things that people in the rural areas of our country need. And we may have to take some more looks at that next year.

But one of the things, it seems to me, we have to commit ourselves to is the proposition that the prosperity that America enjoys in general should be made available to every American if they're willing to work for it, and I hope you will share that commitment.

I'll give you another example. You're going to have a big challenge in South Dakota next year; every State will. I signed the welfare reform bill, and I did it for a simple reason: I learned as Governor and as President that people in Washington don't move people in South Dakota or Arkansas off welfare; it happens at the grassroots level. And after 4 years, I'm proud to tell you that we've reduced the welfare rolls in America by nearly 2 million, and we've increased child support collections by nearly 40 percent, over \$3 billion. And we have done it by letting local people do what they knew would work.

So that welfare reform bill, here's what it says. It says the United States will continue to guarantee to poor families health care, nutrition for the children, if the parents go to work, child care. But we're going to give what used to be the welfare check to the States and let the States and the local communities take that money and figure out how to put able-bodied people in the work force. They can spend that money on doing that, so that people can draw a paycheck, not a welfare check, and move to independence. You have to meet that challenge. Every church, every business, every organization in this State is going to have to think about what we all have to do together to end the culture of poverty. But work is better than welfare for parents, for families, and for America's future, and I hope you will help me build that kind of bridge to the 21st century.

The most important thing we can do in building that bridge is to give every child access to the best education in the world. I know that this school district has one of the highest attendance rates in the entire State of South Dakota, which means it's way above the national average. So I want to start by saying, good for you; don't give it up; bear down and do better. I congratulate you on that.

But I could talk about education the halftime of the homecoming game, but I won't do that. Let me just mention two things. Number one, I know that South Dakota has done a lot of work in distance learning and trying to use technology to bring the benefits of all kinds of subjects to young people who are isolated in rural areas. I worked hard on that when I was a Governor.

Al Gore and I are committed to seeing that by the year 2000, every classroom and library in our country is not only equipped with computers, software, and trained teachers but is also hooked up to what we call the information superhighway, to the Internet, to the World Wide Web. Now, for those of you that are my age or older and don't know much about computers, just like I don't, let me tell you what that means in practical terms. It means that technology has given us the opportunity for the first time in the entire history of the United States to guarantee to every student, the students in the most remote rural districts, the students in the poorest inner-city districts, along with the students in the suburban districts, the students in the richest districts—all of them now have a chance

to get the same information in the same way in the same time at the same level of quality as any other student in America or indeed in the world. That will revolutionize education in America if we get that done. That's a bridge to the 21st century, and I want us to build it.

The other thing I think we have to do is to make a college education available to every single American who needs to go, not only kids coming out of high school but a lot of older folks are going to have to go back and get education and training as well, and we need to make it available.

So in the balanced budget plan that Tim and I have been working for, there are three provisions to help make college education universal. Number one, we make it easier for more people to save more money through IRA's, individual retirement accounts, and withdraw from them later without a tax penalty if the money is going to be spent on a college education or a health emergency or buying a first-time home.

Number two, we want to make at least 2 years of education at a community college as universal in the next 4 years as a high school diploma is today, because our young people need it and a lot of our adults are going to need it when they move from job to job. And here is how we can do that, all paid for in our balanced budget plan. We want to give a tax credit, a dollar-for-dollar reduction off your Federal tax bill, for the cost of tuition at the typical community college for 2 years. All you have to do is show up, go make your grades, make the most of it, and we will pay the bill in that way. No bureaucracy, no hassle, no nothing. We can make a community college education as universal as a high school diploma in just 2 years.

And finally, I believe we ought to have a tax deduction for the cost of college tuition, up to \$10,000 a year, for any kind of college costs. Four years of undergraduate school, medical school, veterinary school, you name it, we ought to make it possible for every child here tonight who wants to go to college to go to college. And that's a bridge to the 21st century we ought to build.

Tim mentioned something about the family leave law. Let me say we've worked hard to make family life more secure over the generations. We've worked to increase childhood immunizations, to improve and increase Head

Start. We've worked hard to make it easier—one of the most important bills we passed in this Congress makes it easier for people in small businesses to take out pensions and easier for people to carry those pensions around with them if they move from job to job. People in smaller businesses should be able to do that.

Only about half the American work force has a good pension plan today. Under this new law, it'll be a lot easier for a lot more people and a lot more employers to participate in guaranteeing pensions to more Americans, and I'm proud of that. I think it'll help South Dakota; I know it'll help my home State. Small businesses are creating most of the jobs in this country, and we need to be doing more to support them. This pension bill will do that.

We also passed a bill, the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill, which says to 25 million Americans, an insurance company cannot automatically take your insurance away from you, your health insurance now, just because somebody in your family got sick or because you moved from job to job. You've got a right to keep that insurance. That can help 25 million Americans. Seven hundred thousand kids a year can be protected by that—just children alone, poor children, new children every year.

Just this week, the Congress agreed to two things I've been asking to do: one, to offer some coverage for mental health conditions. You know, that's a big problem in every State in America, in all kinds of families, little communities and big ones. We now know that a lot of mental health problems are just that, they're health problems. They can be treated. People can get over them; they can work through them. But there's no insurance in most places under most policies. Now we'll begin to change that, and I think that's a positive thing for America.

And most important to me—and this is something my wife's been working on forever and a day—20 years ago, the average hospital stay for a mother who went in to have a baby was 4 days. By 1992, when I was running for President, the average hospital stay had dropped substantially. By the time I was in office, I noticed that more and more insurance companies were actually requiring mothers and their newborns to leave after a day; some of them were being pushed out of the hospital in 8 hours. And it seems to me that the decision about when a mother and a newborn child leave the hospital should be a medical decision for the doctor to

make. Today Congress has voted to say you get at least 48 hours, and 96 hours if you have a cesarean. I think that's a good thing for America. It will make us stronger.

So, I say to all of you, these are things we can do to build America's families. In our budget plan, we've got a plan, also, to help people who are between jobs, who lose their jobs and don't have another one, keep their insurance for 6 months, their health insurance—paid for in the balanced budget plan.

In our budget plan, we have a provision to help families who are caring for their relatives with Alzheimer's disease to get a little respite care. That will save us money, because a lot of families want to care for their parents. But that's a full-time job; that's 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and families that are doing that need a little break. So it will save us money in the long run, and we can afford it in our budget plan.

These are things that—each of them may seem like a small thing, but when you add them all up, we're building the fabric in America that I think is important, where people can succeed at home and succeed at work. I never go anywhere in America that families don't come up and talk to me with the conflicts they feel; nearly every family has felt some conflict between their job as parents and their job at work.

If we have to make a choice, folks, we're in deep trouble. Most parents are working; most parents have to work. We've got to create a country where you can win at home and win at work, be a good parent, be a successful employee or employer. And that's the way to build the right kind of bridge to the 21st century we can all walk across.

Finally, let me just say this: I have worked very hard to prove that we don't have to make a choice between growing our economy and protecting our environment. Most farmers I know care a lot about the environment. The agricultural community did a remarkable thing this year. They all came in and agreed on a new pesticide protection act which repealed the old Delaney clause, which a lot of farmers found absolutely unenforceable and that they couldn't comply with, and instead subjected all kinds of foods, processed foods and raw foods, to new standards to protect not just against cancer but all other kinds of illnesses—supported by the agricultural community, supported by the

consumer community. It's the way America ought to work.

We've passed unanimously a new food protection act which will be better for farmers and better for the children in the future of America. That's the kind of solution we need to find to our public health and our environmental problems.

We've made the air cleaner, the drinking water safer. We've destroyed and cleaned up more toxic waste dumps in 3 years than were cleaned up in the 12 years before I became President. But I want you to know something here in South Dakota on this beautiful night. We still have a lot of challenges. There are still 10 million kids in this country living within 4 miles of a toxic waste dump. That may be hard to imagine out here where you've got all the space in the world, but that's terrifying for parents. And one of the things we intend to do in the next 4 years is to take the 500 worst dumps, that's two-thirds of all that are left, and get rid of them so every American child can be saying, "I'm growing up next to a park, not next to poison." We have to build an environmentally friendly economy, and we can do it by working together.

So I say to you, finally, I want you to think about this election not in partisan terms but in American terms. You're electing the last President of the 20th century, the first President of the 21st century. The Congress you elect will make decisions that will shape this country for 50 years. We hit periods like this every so often.

When we started as a country, our founding families had to say, "Well, are we going to be one nation or just 13 different States?" They decided we'd be one nation. If they hadn't made that decision, you and I wouldn't be Americans today. They would never have gotten around the Louisiana Purchase and making Arkansas and then later making South Dakota a State. That's a big deal. Two hundred and twenty years later it still is felt.

We fought a Civil War over whether the country could break apart. When we became primarily an industrial country, we had to make new decisions about what kind of country we were going to be a hundred years ago. And Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson led us in that.

Now we're moving into a global economy where information and ideas and technology

goes around the world, where American farm prices are up, based in no small measure on what happens elsewhere, and where our exports are at an all-time high, where I can go around the world—I was just in Washington State, and it was interesting; since I've been President, they're selling more airplanes and more computer software, but they're also selling their apples for the first time to Japan.

The world is getting smaller, and we have to learn how to protect our values and still meet all these challenges. And again I will say, I think the most important thing is for us to create a sense that this country can operate the way this community does, that we are neighbors, that if we believe in the same things and we're willing to show up for work tomorrow and obey the law and work hard, we've all got a role to play, we've all got a place in the American community, and we're going to build that bridge to the 21st century together.

I'll say again, our best days are ahead of us. The children here in this audience will have more opportunities to live out their dreams than any generation that has ever lived. They will be doing jobs, many of them that have not been invented yet. Some of them will be doing jobs that have not been imagined yet. And we have got to do those things together that make it possible for them to do it. That's the commitment I ask from you.

In 6 weeks and 4 days, we're going to have an election. Whether you're a Republican, a Democrat, or an independent, I'm asking you, because here you've got a reputation for being civil and neighborly and calm and talking things out. Talk to your friends and neighbors. Sit down over coffee. Talk to them when you're at work. Talk to them when you're at a civic club. Talk to them when you're at a bowling alley. Talk to them at halftime. Talk to them about what you want this country to look like as we roar into that new century and what you want this country to look like when our children are our age. If we do that, our best days are ahead, we'll make the right decision, and we'll sure enough build that bridge to the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:31 p.m. at Brandon Valley High School. In his remarks, he referred to State Senator Chet Jones and student Sarah Sholz.